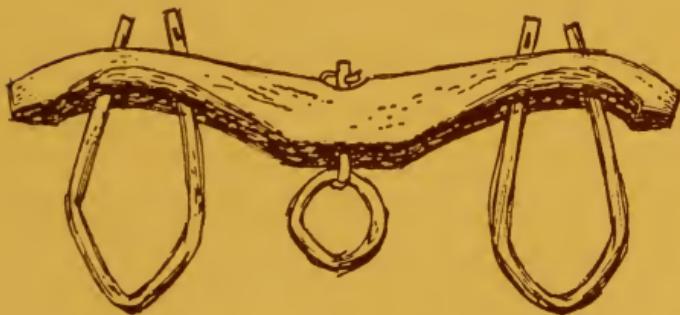


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Captain Lincoln's Way

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Captain Lincoln's Way

An Indian Play for Boys

By
REA WOODMAN

Price 15 cents

The Woodman Plays Company
Wichita, Kansas

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CAPTAIN LINCOLN'S WAY

AN INDIAN DIALOGUE FOR BOYS

Persons Represented

Abraham Lincoln,
Captain of the Sangamon Company, 14th
Illinois Volunteers.

An Old Indian.

First Soldier
Second Soldier
Third Soldier
Fourth Soldier } Of the Sangamon Company
of the 14th Illinois Volunteers.

Several Soldiers of the Sangamon Company.

Time: The Spring of 1832; The Black Hawk War.

Place: A Military Camp in Northern Illinois.

(Scene: an open place. Two or three trees to the right. In the background, somewhat to the side, an army tent, with the flaps down—"the door shut." The First and Second Soldiers are lounging on the ground; the Third Soldier is leaning lazily against a tree. Their guns are near them; their clothing a combination of frontiersman and soldier.)

First Soldier Aw, what yer givin' us? Them Injuns was under a flag of truce!

Second Soldier S'pose they was, you can't trust an Injun, no matter what he's carryin'.

Third Soldier A flag of truce is always ter be respected; that's good military tactics.

First Soldier Black Hawk did the right thing to swoop down on 'em. Stillman should have know'd he'd get wiped out. Not even an Injun's goin' ter stan' fur shootin' down a man that carries a white flag!

Third Soldier An' Stillman had only two hundred and seventy men. What was that agin two thousand?

First Soldier Two thousand? Why, man alive, Black Hawk's got five thousand! 'At's what Sam Gillan says 'at he heard. Stillman didn't have no show from the start. Five thousand mad Injuns, a-howlin' and a-hootin'—

Third Soldier Who's afraid of their howlin' and hootin'? Yellin' aint never killed anybody yit.

Second Soldier (*wagging his head with intense conviction*) It's come pretty nigh ter killin' 'em. You take five thousand Injuns on the war-path, enjoyin' of theirselves, an' I tell you, fellers, I ain't the man as wants ter face 'em!

Third Soldier So long as a feller has a good gun he's safe,—jes' keep the Injun in front of you, an' blaze away.

Second Soldier What if the Injun is jes' naturally behind you, an' he blazes away first?

First Soldier (*taking up his gun to polish the stock*) This Company could wipe out them pesky red varmints in no time. If this War ends without our wipin' 'em up, it won't be much of a War, that's all I got to say.

Third Soldier (*yawning hugely*) It's no shakes of a war, ennyway. We ain't seen an Injun yit.

Second Soldier It won't worry me into an airly grave if we never see one.

Third Soldier (*chewing a twig meditatively*) Injun fightin's like learnin' a trick; if you know the trick, you kin do it; if you don't, you might as well quit. If you don't know the kink of fightin' Injuns, cut for the tall timber. That's my advice if ennybody's askin' you.

First Soldier (*polishing his gun stock*) Wall, I say it's time somebody settled old Black Hawk. He hates the white man worser'n pizzen. Last year, you mind, he ramped around fur a spell.

(Enter [right] while the First Soldier is speaking) "a poor, forlorn, solitary, hungry, helpless old Indian." Over his deerskin trousers and flannel shirt he wears an old red blanket tightly wrapped around him. He is timid and scared, and hides behind a tree.)

Third Soldier If the Sangamon boys ever run across him he'll stop his rampin' mighty quick.

Second Soldier (stretching and yawning)
That's right, old pard! He'll be a dead Injun on the spot.

(Enter [left] the Fourth Soldier, running, gun in hand.)

Fourth Soldier Black Hawk's on the rampage agin! He's comin'!

First Soldier (comfortably) Aw, go chase yourself! Black Hawk'll never get this far from base!

Second Soldier (springing up) By Jinks, there is an Injun! (The Indian starts forward, timidly.) Halt!

Third Soldier (pointing his gun at the Indian) Stand still, you pesky old rat!

Indian (taking a folded paper from his belt) Injun white man's friend. See um paper talk: from Big White Chief.

First Soldier (yanking the Indian forward) Paper nothin'! What do you want here?

Indian (looking piteously from one to the other) Injun white man's friend. See paper um talks; paper um talks!

Second Soldier (suddenly very valiant) He's a spy! (He takes hold of the Indian roughly.) We'll string you up with your talkin' paper!

Indian (pleadingly) See um talkin' paper! See um talkin' paper!

Third Soldier Like enough it's old Black Hawk himself!

Fourth Soldier (searching the Indian roughly) Surrender, you old villian! Don't shake that fool paper at us!

Indian Me good Injun! White Man say so. See um talkin' paper!

(Enter [right] three Soldiers, on the run.)

Soldiers We saw him comin'! He come up along the creek!

Third Soldier He's sure enough Injun. We'll soon settle him!

Indian (falling on his shaking old knees) Me good Injun! See um talkin' paper!

First Saldier Get up, you old rascal! When wimmen beg for mercy, you scalp 'em!

Second Soldier (trying to force the Indian to get up) Get up, I say!—Here, fellows, lend a hand!

Soldiers (in loud tones, swarming around the kneeling Indian) String him up! Shoot 'im! Hangin's too good for 'im! He kills wimmin an' children! He burns cabins with the folks inside! Hustle him along! Get up, you old fire bug! We ought to scalp him, by rights! (*They try to get him up; failing that, they attempt to drag him along.*) Now, all together, one two three!

(*The flaps of the tent fly open, and Captain Abraham Lincoln rushes from the tent. He is hatless, coatless, collarless, with his vest flying open. Evidently just roused from sleep.*)

Lincoln What's the row here? Stand back, you fellows! (*He dashes into the crowd, pushing and striking right and left, and scatters the men, revealing the scared old Indian in a trembling heap on the ground, holding on to his "talking paper."*) You're a brave lot, you are, all piling on one old Redskin, and a scared one, at that! What's the matter with you? Would you hang an unprotected man?—a friendless man? You're a hefty bunch of soldiers!

First Soldier (rubbing his shins, hurt in the scrimmage) He's a spy!

Lincoln (scornfully) He looks like it, doesn't he?

Third Soldier It's old Black Hawk hisself!

Second Soldier We've got to kill the varmints—rid the country of 'em.

Fourth Soldier (waving his gun) We're goin' to hang him higher'n a kite! (*The Soldiers begin to crowd around the Indian again, threateningly.*) Come along, you old fire-bug!

Lincoln (sternly) Fall back there, fellows! Fall back, will you! Let the Injun alone. He hasn't done anything to you. He can't hurt you. He couldn't hurt a rabbit! Let him alone, I say! (*The Indian half runs, half crawls to Lincoln's feet.*)

Indian (holding up the paper in a shaking hand) See 'um talkin' paper! Me good Injun! (*Lincoln eyes him thoughtfully.*)

First Soldier (to Lincoln) What's the idee? Want 'im to put in a muzesum?

Second Soldier (to Lincoln) What are you afraid of, Capt'n? We'll settle him for you.

Lincoln (quietly) "Settle him for me?"

Second Soldier If you're afraid, hand him over to us.

Lincoln (more quietly) If I'm what?

Second Soldier (with a swagger) I say we aint afraid, if you are. Hand him over to us.

Indian (brokenly) See um talkin' paper!

Lincoln (coldly) Who says I'm afraid? (*The Indian looks at him anxiously, with the paper outstretched. Lincoln coolly rolls up his sleeves, then deliberately steps in front of the crouching Indian.*) The man who says I'm a coward fights me here and now. (*to the Second Soldier*) Are you ready?

Third Soldier Aw, Capt'n, hold on! That's not fair!

Second Soldier You're bigger'n we are, an' heavier. You don't give us a show.

Lincoln I'll give all the show you want, boys; more show than you give this Injun. I'll tell you what. I'll fight you all, one after the other, just as you come. What do you say? Take it out of me, if you can, but you shall not touch this Indian. When a man comes to me for help he's going to get it, if I have to lick all Sangamon County. (*There is a silence.*) Are you ready? Who's first?

First Soldier (sullenly, backing off) I reckon you kin have the old Injun, Capt'n. (*He goes out, to right.*)

Second Soldier Reckon I don't want the Injun nohow, Capt'n. (*He slouches out, to right, with two other Soldiers.*)

Fourth Soldier Take yer Injun, Capt'n. I resign. (*He follows, to right.*)

Third Soldier (with a grin) It's nothin' to me, Capt'n. You're welcome to the ole rip. (*He goes out, whistling, with the rest of the Soldiers.*)

Lincoln (having turned, and taken a long look at the crouching Indian) Well, my friend?

Indian (tremuously) Me good Injun. White Chief say me good Injun!

Lincoln (motioning him to get up) Shake. They shake hands solemnly.) Let's see that paper. (He reads it.) Oh, you're from General Cass's Division! "A true friend," he says here. That's all right; we'll take care of you.

Indian Me friend of um White Man.

Lincoln (nodding and handing back the paper) That's all right

Indian (with a sigh of relief) Me heapum hungry.

Lincoln I reckon you are. Come get some grub. (He swings out, to left, the Indian following hopefully.)

(In a few seconds, from right, re-enter the First Soldier. He stops suddenly, as if struck with something he sees straight ahead, offstage, to left.)

(Re-enter [right] the Second Soldier, whistling lustily.)

Second Soldier (stopping to look where the First Soldier is looking) Well, I'll swan!

First Soldier (looking to left, offstage) Dividin' his grub with an Injun!

Second Soldier Jes' so.

(Curtain on the two stolidly staring to the left)

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